



Nashville VBA Regional Office

UTVA Report

March 2016

Veterans Benefits Administration Improving Service for Veterans, their Families, and Survivors Compensation

1. *Claims Processing*

- **1.4M** claims completed in FY15 – **67K** more than FY14; sixth year in a row of more than 1M claims
- Reduced backlog **86%** from 611K peak in March 2013 to **83,226**
- Reduced inventory **61%** from 884K peak in July 2012 to **348,729** – a **32%** reduction from FY14
- Increased claim productivity by **11.5%** per FTE and issue productivity by **81%** per FTE since 2009 –mitigated effects of a **132%** workload increase from **2.7M** medical issues in FY09 to **6.35M** medical issues in FY15
- Claim quality **90%**; issue quality **96%**; above **98%** in 7 of 8 categories where we measure quality
- Average days waiting for a claims decision (pending) is **93 days** – a 189-day reduction from 282-day peak in March 2013; average days to complete is **128 days** – a 58-day reduction from FY14
- Added approximately **1.8M** Veterans to compensation rolls since 2009 (1.2M net), and **28%** more Veterans and Survivors to compensation and pension caseload, from 3.9M in FY09 to **5M** in FY15
- Expediting Veterans claims: **54%** of receipts in FY16 Q1 were Fully Developed, up from 3% in 2012; received more than **2.8M** completed exam templates from VHA in FY15
- Went from touching 5,000 tons of paper annually to processing **99.8%** of disability compensation claims processed electronically
- **322K** compensation claims in electronic inventory – only **26.5K** pension and DIC in paper, completed **4.35M+** rating decisions and **2.5M+** claims in VBMS
- **1 in 4** Veterans submit their dependency requests online – more than **63%** receive payments in **under 1 day**
- Automatic burial allowance payments to surviving spouses within **6 days** (down from 190)

2. *Appeals*

- Appeals actions increased **30%** from 135K in 2011 to **176K** in FY15 (1.4M completed claims FY15)
- Appeals rate consistent with historical levels at **11-12%**
- **4-5%** reached Board of Veterans Appeals, **1.2%** decided in Veteran's favor, often based on additional evidence

3. *eBenefits*

- Over **5.4M** registered users
- **212M** contacts with Veterans in FY15 (96% online) – **211%** increase over FY14 – vs. 9M contacts (majority by phone) in 2009

Nashville Regional Office Staffing and Hiring Update

1. The Nashville Regional Office is staffed at **503** full-time equivalents and **6** temporary hires. The Nashville Regional Office workforce is currently comprised of 61% Veteran employees.
2. For Fiscal Year 16, the Nashville VSC has hired 16 Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs), 1 Staff Assistant for the Director's Office, 4 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) for VR&E, and 20 Call Agents for the NCC.

Summary of Service Provided by the Nashville Regional Office Veterans Service Center (VSC)

1. VSC information for Fiscal year to date.
 - a. Completed **10,431** disability rating claims
 - b. Disability rating claims average days pending (ADP) is 101 days
 - c. Completed **1,830** dependency claims completed (excludes RBPS)
 - d. Dependency claims ADP is 218 days; below the National ADP of 359.2 days
 - e. The temp VSR's have completed the drill pay backlog cases and are in the process of being trained to work dependency cases.
 - f. The average days to complete (ADC) for CRDP/CRSC claims is 36.1 days.
 - g. The station's 12 month claim-based accuracy is 93.6%, and the 12 month Issue-based accuracy is 97.6%, both above the national averages
 - h. Completed 1,584 Appeal actions completed – NOD's Resolved/SOC's Issued – 794; Form 9's Resolved/Certified to BVA – 394; Remands Resolved/Recertified to BVA - 396
 - i. Homeless ADP remains below the target of 75 days at 66.6
 - j. The backlog inventory of 1,979 claims

Summary of Service Provided by the Nashville Regional Office Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Division

1. VR&E has two new videos out on Youtube providing an introduction to services.
 - a. Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment) Video
 - i. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pq1eDxZv1Zk&feature=youtu.be>
 - b. Chapter 36 (Educational/Vocational Counseling) Video
 - i. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pq1eDxZv1Zk&feature=youtu.be>
2. Rehabilitation Services **Fiscal Year to Date 2016 (to March 1st)**
 - a. Assisted **109 Veterans** in obtaining positive outcomes
 - 71 Suitable Employment
 - 27 Maximum Rehabilitation Gain
 - 4 Pursuing Further Education
 - 7 Independent Living
 - b. Processed **44 IDES** applications (through February 23rd)
 - c. Processed **900 Chapter 31** applications (though February 23rd)
 - d. Processed **730 Entitlement Determinations** (through January 31st)
3. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
 - a. Served approximately **2,978 VR&E** participants
 - 1,810 in Rehabilitation Plans
 - 1,514 Pursuit of Training
 - 81.1% Active Case Workload
 - b. Telecounseling services are now offered as another platform for communication for Veterans throughout the state of Tennessee
4. VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC)
 - a. Serves approximately **128 walk-ins a semester** between Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and Austin Peay State University (APSU).
 - b. MTSU opened the Veterans and Family Center in November 2015.

- i. A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is on site twice a month to perform supervisory visits and answer general questions about Chapter 31 services.
 - ii. A new program, “VA Wednesday” was launched in January. A benefits counselor goes to the center every other Wednesday to assist Veterans with benefits questions and eBenefits.
- c. APSU celebrated its one year anniversary in October.
- 5. IDES Program
 - a. The VR&E IDES program is currently serving approximately **322 Servicemembers** at this location and an additional **131 NDAA Veterans** at other locations throughout the state.
 - b. Completing development of claims in **2 days**.

Summary of Service Provided by the Nashville Nashville Call Center (NCC)

- 1. FYTD, the Nashville Call Center answered **231,317** calls.
- 2. FYTD the wait time for all VA Call Centers nationally is **5 minutes and 39 seconds**.
- 3. Live Chat and Dependency Claims Pilots
 - a. Live Chat (Veterans and VSOs) – NCC agents answered **86,626** Chats with an average wait time of **4:19** minutes and a Chat duration of **12:05** minutes.
 - b. Dependency Claims – FYTD the 20 NC agents have initiated **24,249** claims and processed **18,894** claims. Agents can add minor biological children, spouses, minor stepchildren, school aged children, and remove spouses due to death or divorce (when no children are on award.)

Events: January - present

- 1. Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Outreach- Murfreesboro, Tennessee
Beginning in November 2015, representatives from the Nashville Regional Office provide assistance each Wednesday at the MTSU Veterans and Military Family Center to students, faculty and other community members regarding VA benefits. Chris Dingwall, National Call Center Assistant Coach, Tomeka Cain, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Counselor, and Jordan McCall, VR&E Counselor are available in person and through tele-counseling to assist Veterans with claim related questions and issues.